Course Title:

**Interpersonal Psychoanalytic Work in Racial and Other Diversities: Aspiring Towards Radical Openness**

**Instructor:** Anton Hart, PhD

**Overview:**
In contrast with a multicultural competency perspective, this course aims to address issues of racial, ethnic, and other diversities in the psychoanalytic situation, approaching them from an Interpersonal perspective which emphasizes the analyst’s curiosity, receptive listening, participant-observation, and self-reflectiveness (and the cultivation of these qualities in the analysand). We will examine the central roles of inquiry and openness, and also their obstacles, in considering how emergent differences between self and other may be psychoanalytically explored, engaged and, sometimes, transcended. The instructor's concept of Radical Openness, a hermeneutically derived orientation to the clinical psychoanalytic process, involving unusual forms of receptivity to the analysand's experience of the analyst, will provide a foundational conceptual framework. Those communications from the analysand—the other—that the analyst experiences as most foreign are seen as being personally relevant to, and potentially transformative for, the analyst. Interpersonal theory allows
considerable openness to various implementations of the analyst’s flexible and resourceful psychoanalytic participation since it conceives of transference as not simply distortion but as the patient’s unique perspective on who the therapist is and what the therapist does. The essence of IP as I see it, is that one cannot NOT participate; psychoanalysis is, ultimately, co-participatory self-analysis. Accordingly, the analyst rejects the privileged position of the "expert." That means the analyst’s participation must involve attending to all prejudices and presumptions about the Other as they are expressed and enacted in the field. This is universal, pertaining to both analysts of color and white analysts as well.

**Questions to be considered in this course include:**

What are the therapist's anxieties that a competency orientation seeks to manage, and what might the hidden liabilities of valuing the mastery of contents over attention to process be?

What are the different *diversities* and how might they be prioritized relative to each other in the psychoanalytic situation?

How can we reconcile a stance of neutrality and the imperative of bringing issues of race and other forms of diversity into the foreground in the treatment process in as much as they are, arguably, always present, even if unspoken?

*Are* issues of race and other forms of diversity *always* present, even when the psychoanalytic dyad is racially homogeneous?

Is psychoanalysis usefully understood as a “white” discipline, the psychoanalytic consulting room, the psychoanalytic classroom, and the supervisory meeting room "white spaces"?

Are there inherently racist, classist, hetero-centric or patriarchal aspects of psychoanalytic theory, psychoanalytic pedagogy, psychoanalytic institutes, and psychoanalytic membership organizations?

What did H.S. Sullivan say about difference?

How might the concept of participant/observer poise one to engage in issues of diversity?

What are the implications of these questions for how we proceed?

**Meeting Time:** 12.5 hours as a one credit course

TBD, 2 hours, 5 minutes per class
**Dates:**
Six sessions, TBD

**Session 1: Diversities**
Course Introduction: This session will introduce the concept of “the diversities”—rather than one diversity—and address pedagogical questions on approaching this subject. We will also explore participants’ particular interests and apprehensions at this starting juncture.

**Required Reading:**


**Suggested Readings:**


**Learning objectives:**
1) Identify professionals’ reasons for and resistances to addressing issues of racial and other diversities in our psychoanalytic work.
2) Develop an understanding of the personal and structural anxieties associated with engaging issues of diversity, difference and otherness.
Session 2: Prejudice, Discrimination & Othering
In this session, drawing on the seminal psychoanalytic contributions of Bion and Levenson, we will look at the central problems of mindedness and curiosity, as we attempt to formulate a conceptual foundation for prejudice, discrimination, and othering.

Required Readings:


Suggested reading:

Learning objectives:
1) Recognize the central roles of curiosity and openness as antidotes to cultural ignorance and insensitivity.
2) Identify the theoretical lines that support the analyst’s attempt to cultivate qualities of curiosity and openness in themselves and in their patients.

Session 3: Race and Racism
In this session we will look at contemporary attempts to look into matters of race and racism, with a particular focus on African American experience. We will have an in-class screening of archival video footage of Drs. Ralph Greenson and Ellis Toney discussing their inter-racial analysis.

Required Readings:


**Suggested Reading:**

**Learning objectives:**
1) List at least four features of African Americans' experience of structural racial oppression in the psychoanalytic field.
2) Identify the relevance of thinking about and addressing issues of racial oppression in the clinical psychoanalytic process as an integral matter rather than as an “add-on”.

**Session 4: Techniques**
In this session we will consider techniques, pitfalls, and controversies that may be taken into consideration for the psychoanalytic engagement of issues of prejudice, discrimination and otherness: hermeneutics and Field Theory and their implications for engaging racism and otherness.

**Required Readings:**

Suggested Reading:


Learning objectives:
1) Distinguish between radical openness and self-disclosure.
2) Recognize pitfalls and breakdowns that can occur in diversity-related explorations and find ways to use these in the service of the restoration of open dialogue.

Session 5: Whiteness/PSA/Interpersonal Tradition
This session looks at the experience of racism, and considers matters of whiteness and privilege.

Required Readings:


Suggested Readings:


Learning objectives:
1) Describe the concept of the “discriminatory gesture” and describe three of its mechanisms of impact.
2) List four aspects of racial hatred, two regarding the experience of hating, two regarding the experience of being hated.

**Session 6: Diversity in Sexualities**

In this final meeting we will consider diversity in the sexual realm, followed by an exploration of the subversive and emancipatory dimensions of the psychoanalytic process. We will wrap up by considering what we have covered and what has been left out.

**Required Readings:**


**Suggested Readings:**


**Learning objectives:**
1) Contextualize the category of sexual diversity through the identification of three questionable presumptions that psychoanalytic theory has made about sexual orientation
2) Describe two conservative and two subversive aspects of the psychoanalytic approach to theory and practice.